

STATEMENT BY THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF FAMILY DOCTORS (WONCA)

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Agenda item: WPR/RC68/8 Transitioning to integrated financing of priority public health services

The World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA), see www.globalfamilydoctor.com, represents members from more than 150 countries in all regions of the world, and brings together those who are committed to developing family medicine as a key discipline for stronger and more effective health systems. Family medicine as a primary care specialty is present in a majority of countries of the Western Pacific region.

WONCA notes the relevant action document designed to provide guidance to Members States on actions to help secure essential public health functions that can ensure the sustainability and resilience of their health systems.

WONCA agrees that there is a need to secure essential public health functions and that this is relevant not only for countries facing reductions in funding but also the countries undergoing service delivery and budget reforms.

WONCA believes that general practice/family medicine has an essential role to play

In 2013, Dr. Margaret Chan launched WONCA's new guidebook on *The Contribution Of Family Medicine To Improving Health Systems* <http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/Guidebook>. The guidebook includes a chapter from the WHO showcasing the research into the impact family medicine is having in improving health outcomes in this region, including China and Thailand.

In order to provide universal coverage, our countries need to stem the costs of health care, and can do so through increasing investment in community-based health services. And at the same time there must be a movement of funding from hospitals to the community, and especially to rural communities, rather than expecting more community-based care to be delivered with no increase in resources.

As said in the WHO Global strategy on human resources for health for 2030, "*Adequate investment in the health-care workforce, including general practice and family medicine, is required to provide community-based, person-centred, continuous, equitable and integrated care.*"

We recommend that, all parties recognize that family medicine is the key specialty whose competencies and scope of practice allow comprehensive, coordinated and person centred care that meets multiple medical needs for patients and communities over time. Family doctors, working with other primary healthcare and health promotion workers, can integrate patient needs for prevention, and acute and chronic care across disease groups. When appropriately trained and working within an adequately resourced clinical setting, family doctors have been shown to be both cost-effective, valuable and able to improve health outcomes for entire populations. All countries have the potential to transform their health workforce by training more family doctors as a critical part of a multidisciplinary team providing integrated, people-centred primary health care – the foundation of universal health coverage.

WONCA is committed to work with the WHO WRPO and its constituencies in Member States to achieve these outcomes, as it does to achieve the overall goal of health for all.

WONCA calls for a family doctor for every family. This means that every family has access to a caring committed family doctor working with other primary health care providers, including dedicated nurses and community health workers to provide comprehensive continuing care to all people.